



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Washington, D. C. 20535

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In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

SECRET

UNITED STATES SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON  
INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES (SSC)

RE: INTERVIEW OF FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
(FBI) SPECIAL AGENT HOMER W. SCHWEPPE BY  
SSC STAFF MEMBER JAMES DICK

On September 23, 1975, after a short orientation discussion and after advising him of his rights under the Constitution and reminding him that his appearance was voluntary, SSC Staff Member James Dick interviewed FBI Special Agent Homer W. Schweppe in the presence of SSC stenotypist Susan Hanback regarding his knowledge of the following: The "Hunter Project," "Bureau Informant 200," "the SAM Survey," "Z Coverage," and opening of mail by FBI employees.

At the outset Dick asked Schweppe to document his FBI service. Schweppe responded by listing the following: Assignments in San Francisco from late 1946 to mid-1947; in Los Angeles from mid-1947 to mid-1951; at FBI Headquarters (FBIHQ) from May, 1951, to May, 1958, and again from late 1960 to November, 1961; in the Washington Field Office (WFO) of the FBI from May, 1958, on, except for the 1960 to 1961 period just cited.

During the course of the interview Schweppe was also asked to indicate the nature of his assignments at FBIHQ. He indicated he was assigned for the main part to units within the Domestic Intelligence Division dealing with Soviet military attache personnel and with members of Elizabeth Bentley's "espionage ring."

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JFK (1)(B)

Dick's initial inquiry was directed to the extent of Scheweppe's knowledge of the "Hunter Project." When Scheweppe conceded he was not familiar with the term, Dick offered as an exhibit for review a copy of a February 8, 1958, memorandum directed to Director Hoover entitled "Hunter Project." This memorandum outlined arrangements to be affected between the FBI and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) regarding the manner in which the FBI would be provided the results of CIA's monitoring of certain overseas mail. On review of the document, Scheweppe stated he was certain he had never seen that memo, but he acknowledged that on the basis of the memo he had a recollection about such activity by the CIA. Scheweppe recalled that at some point prior to his transfer from FBIHQ in May, 1958, and he indicated he felt it must have been earlier than the February 8, 1958, date indicated above, he had pass across his desk in the normal flow of official mail what he referred to as the modern day version of computer printout lists consisting, to the best of his recollection, of names of what were presumed to be Soviet residents as well as addresses in the Soviet Union. Scheweppe indicated that he had seen several such lists but since they did not seem applicable to the type of cases being supervised by Scheweppe at the time, he paid them little heed. He recalled that at least with some of the later printouts there were instructions accompanying the printouts to the effect that names and/or addresses of interest should be flagged for what was presumed to be a "watch list" of some sort.

JFK (1)(B)

Dick asked specifically when Scheweppe first became aware of the lists mentioned above; whether he was familiar with FBI Form 5-88, a form prepared for placing a request on the "watch list"; whether he had seen any of the results of the CIA monitoring; and whether he had seen any reproduction of correspondence photographed by [CIA] in connection with the "Hunter Project."

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Schwepe replied that he thought the lists he mentioned earlier probably were seen by him before February, 1958, but he acknowledged he could not recall exactly when. He said he would not now recall ever having seen FBI Form 5-88. He replied that, since he felt he had never placed a name or address on the "watch list," he would not have any specific results routed to his personal attention. He added, however, that if the results were routed to all supervisors concerned with Soviet intelligence and related matters, he probably did see such results and routinely initialed the accompanying routing slips. He said he could recall no specific "CIA results" if, in fact, he did see anything specific.

Dick asked whether Schwepe was aware of who designated the routing of the lists he had seen, and Schwepe responded that he assumed it was some individual in the office of the division's Assistant Director who performed such an administrative function. Schwepe said he did not recall a Miss Triplett (phonetic), who, according to Dick, was responsible for routing the "Hunter Project" material to appropriate supervisors. Schwepe said he could have been included in such routing because of his assignment.

Dick then queried Schwepe on his familiarity with the term "Bureau Informant 200" (BI 200), when he first became aware of the term, and whether he ever saw any of the material attributed to that informant. In this connection Dick exhibited another FBIHQ memo dated February 6, 1958, which referred to BI 200 as the designation used by FBIHQ to forward to its field offices information received from [CIA] under the "Hunter Project." Schwepe was unable to recall exactly when he first became aware of the use and identity of BI 200, but he assumed it was in early 1958. He said he could recall seeing information attributed to BI 200 both while at FBIHQ and in WFO but that he could no longer recall the specific nature of the items involved. He said he presumed that all of them dealt with Soviet-related investigatory matters. Schwepe said he did not believe he has seen any references to BI 200 in the past 15 years or so and that he may have seen as many as five references a year before that.

Dick also queried Schweppe about his knowledge of the "SAM Survey" (SAM) and "Z Coverage" (Z). He asked Schweppe whether he knew when "SAM" and "Z" were initiated, what they consisted of, when they ceased, when he first became aware of them, and whether he had seen any results of those projects. Schweppe replied that "SAM" and "Z" were on a need-to-know basis within WFO but that he in time heard about them through office "shop talk" and then concluded that those designations indicated projects in which mail to and/or from the Soviet Union and Soviet bloc countries was monitored. He said he did not know when those projects were initiated or when they terminated. He said that he would have to guess within a tolerance of two or three years that he first heard of those projects in the early 1960s. Schweppe said he was called on from time to time to translate correspondence in German, which correspondence had been photographed by some source not identified initially. Schweppe suggested that on later inquiry about the source of the correspondence he was informed it was either from "SAM" or "Z." He said he was unable to recall specifically who so advised him. He felt it was possible that word was just "passed along" to that effect. He could not recall whether each specific individual item was identified in a particular, special manner so as to tie it in to its source. Schweppe stated that he believes all such material translated by him was directed to officials at the Soviet and/or Soviet bloc embassies in Washington, D. C., and not to any non-diplomatic personnel. Such translation requirements were quite infrequent, and Schweppe was not called on to translate any such material within the past eight or ten years, to the best of his recollection.

Schweppe said it was his impression that "SAM" in New York City was handled in space at one or the other of New York's airports. He said he was unaware of the specific arrangements in Washington, D. C. He related that he was aware that FBI Special Agent John De Bettencourt, since deceased, was directly involved in WFO's "Z Coverage" project but that he did not know specifically to whom De Bettencourt was answerable.

Dick asked whether Schweppe was aware of any mail having been opened by FBI employees in situations other than the projects referred to above. Schweppe, after making the observation that Federal law and FBI regulations prohibit such activity, said he himself had never opened anyone's mail in his capacity as an FBI employee, that he never observed any other FBI employee so engaged, and that he personally was not aware of any specific instances in which that might have happened. At this point Schweppe related that while he was assigned to the Los Angeles Office, he suspected that a female employee, whose name he could not recall, might possibly have been engaged in the surreptitious opening of other people's mail because of the suspicious nature of her actions at certain times. Schweppe added that these were suspicions raised by circumstantial evidence only.

Dick then presented a hypothetical situation in which agents on duty might obtain mail posted by an individual and then proceed to open the same and review the contents. He asked whether Schweppe was aware of any such instances. Schweppe acknowledged that the suggested scenario sounded realistic enough but added that he could recall no such actual situations.

During the course of the interview, Schweppe indicated that he had been assigned to Soviet-related investigatory matters in WFO until early 1959, after which he was assigned to the handling of German, Latin American, Middle East, and Chinese investigatory matters at different times.

Schweppe concluded by stating that his knowledge and recollection of the subject matter constituting the basis for the inquiry were weak. He reiterated that he never opened any other person's mail in his capacity as an FBI employee, that he never witnessed any other FBI employee opening any such mail, and that he cannot recall ever being aware of any situation in which mail was opened by FBI employees, exclusive of the "SAM" and "Z" projects mentioned above.

This interview commenced about 10:15 a.m., September 23, 1975, and concluded at about 11:15 p.m. the same day.